



City of Arts & Innovation

News Release

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Contact:

Phil Pitchford

Public Information Officer

951-826-5975

ppitchford@riversideca.gov

City of Riverside Awarded \$4.375 Million in State Funds to House Homeless Youth

Money will help purchase as many as five homes to create 25 units of housing for young people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – The City of Riverside has been granted a conditional award of \$4.375 million in state funds that will be used to help purchase as many as five homes to create 25 units of housing for young people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless.

The local award was part of \$156.4 million in grants announced Tuesday by Gov. Gavin Newsom to help cities and counties expand the availability of housing for individuals and families experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness. Across the state, 12 projects in six counties will create 556 new affordable homes. Riverside was the only project awarded in Inland Southern California.

“The City of Riverside’s commitment to reducing homelessness focuses on preventing people from becoming homeless in the first place,” Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson said. “We know young people, particularly foster youth, are vulnerable and at high risk of becoming homeless, which is why these funds are so critical to our overall strategy of addressing homelessness.”

The City of Riverside will partner on the project with Walden Family Services, which will provide supportive services to young people ages 18-21, including pregnant and parenting youth, and foster and former foster youth who are at risk of homelessness.

The Walden Family Services Housing for Transitional Youth project calls for purchasing single-family homes throughout the City of Riverside and converting them to Single Room Occupancy (SRO) units where clients can be housed together while receiving services – including case management, education assistance, and job and life skills training -- to support them in achieving self-sufficiency.

“We know from experience that pairing services with shelter is the recipe for success in helping people get off the streets,” Mayor Pro Tem Erin Edwards said. “This is especially true of young people who can avoid becoming homeless altogether if they have the right housing and guidance at this crucial point in their lives.”

The latest round of funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) brings the total of homes funded through the Homekey program to 14,040 across the state. The program is available to cities, counties, tribes, and housing authorities to develop a broad range of housing types including hotels, motels, hostels, single-family homes, multifamily apartments, adult residential facilities, and modular housing, and to convert commercial properties and other existing buildings to permanent or interim housing.

“Homekey continues to demonstrate that we can build quickly, and at a fraction of the usual cost, to deliver much-needed affordable homes for Californians struggling to find a place to live,” Gov. Newsom said. “There’s still more work ahead, but the state is taking proactive measures, from implementing accountability standards to offering incentives, to confront this housing crisis head on.”

Homekey was launched during the COVID-19 pandemic as an extension of Project Roomkey to eliminate the need for congregate shelters and curb the spread of disease among individuals experiencing homelessness, a particularly vulnerable group of Californians. The program funds additional building types and supports a broader population of people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. About \$400 million remains to be awarded from the current round of funding.

“It has been greatly rewarding to see the growth and impact of Homekey on California’s most vulnerable residents,” said HCD Director Gustavo Velasquez. “To me, the 14,000 homes funded through Homekey represent more than just buildings. They represent real people exiting homelessness more quickly, and the opportunity for housing stability to greatly improve their quality of life.”